

New York letter

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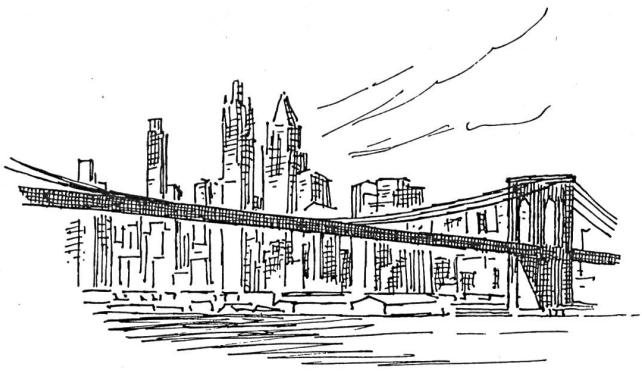
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NEW YORK LETTER

The cold of winter, the short dark days, the snow and rain all lose their sadness in New York in the warm brilliance of the permanently lighted shopwindows, the flickering gaiety of the neon signs with their colors bright as tropical flowers, and the splendor of the variety shows, the theaters and the gay balls and banquets resplendent with sumptuous clothes and music.

This winter, more than ever before, evening dresses add a touch of refined elegance to first nights at the Metropolitan Opera and the many theaters on 42nd Street, as well as to the gay parties held at luxurious hotels and clubs. With the arrival of the cocktail hour, the classical tailormades and woollen jersey dresses give way to silk suits or short dressy dresses, which can be worn the whole evening through, for dining at a restaurant and in smart night clubs.

What is new this year in the fashions for after five o'clock? The trend is mainly towards a very studied elegance, exaggerated even, reminiscent of the first years of the century. The rather severe simplicity is dethroned and its place taken by a greater refinement in the fabrics, cut and trimmings, and by an incredible variety of fabrics, lines and accessory details. Never since the palmy days before the first World War have so many lovely fabrics of all kinds been seen — silks, laces, cottons and also tulles and other rayon fabrics with a new and different look, nylons found in countless variations and all the new mixtures of natural and man-made fibres.

The very studied effects of the fabrics correspond to the refinement in the cut of the dresses and the distinctive putting together of different materials. Since new trails have to be blazed, and the old familiar paths left behind in order to create something new and original, and fortunately the wealth of the fabrics available makes this possible, the changes are rung by using the fabrics in original ways. Couturiers and wholesale houses combine brilliantly and with great imagination the different materials at their disposal. They put silk with lace, velvet with satin, heavy fabrics with the most diaphanous of chiffons, soft jerseys with furs. The simple classic taffeta of young girls' ball dresses becomes more luxurious with the addition of festooned scallops alternating with pleated flounces. Full dance skirts in tulle or organdy are embroidered with large bands of geometric designs. The finishing touch to dresses in eyelet embroidery on batiste, organdy or nylon is given by little boleros or velvet jackets in the color of the fabric. Lace is appliqué on satin and faille, in effects that seem very new to us but, in fact, recall the lavish gowns of the turn of the century. In other models silk prevails discreetly accompanied by lace, tulle or silk chiffon. This putting together of different materials, colors and textures that are contrasting but nevertheless go well together, forms the basis of the newest fashion.

American mills and weavers in Switzerland and other European countries are all outdoing one another in ingenuity, and the market is flooded with an extra-



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« Senera » and « Galopade » silks
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ordinary variety of fine fabrics. This luxurious diversity, this originality in the new fabrics that are appearing every day, is further enhanced by the present way of using fabrics and mixing them ad infinitum. This is where the art of the French couturiers is revealed in the collections they create especially for America, as well as the skill of the American creators of wholesale



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« Amadis » silk
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and ready-to-wear fashions in the medium price ranges which will be spread right over the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from New York to San Francisco.

Silks play a leading role for gala evening gowns and the more numerous cocktail and little dinner dresses. Silk is the indispensable companion of the laces whose popularity has been so marked since the beginning of the season. Thus an off the shoulder dress with long sleeves in beige lace is worn over a lovely faille of the same shade and completed by a large stole of shot silk taffeta, worked with gathers and fringes. Another dress has azure blue silk at the waist of a sulphur yellow lace sheath. A full-length beige taffeta dress forms the foundation for a light veiling of black lace covering only part of the skirt.

Similar effects to those of black lace on a coloured or white ground are found in the light fine cottons of St. Gall which are used for making evening dresses for winter cruises but also for next spring and summer too. There are organdies in pastel shades with flock printed designs, black or coloured or in contrasting shades. These light fabrics have the advantage of being able to be worn at almost any time of the year, of being

easy to look after and easy to pack when traveling. St. Gall makes these prints in an incredible variety of fabrics and for dresses suitable for all ages, not only for young girls but also for women. For bridal gowns and bridesmaids' dresses, for graduation ceremonies, white flock prints on a white organdy ground or on light pastel grounds make beautiful and elegant dresses for very little cost.

Whether it is a question of silk or cotton fabrics, organdies or silks, printed, plain or embroidered fabrics, Switzerland's contribution to American fashions is unequalled. Thanks to the variety of their products, Swiss manufacturers are able to offer their clients in New York exclusive designs that could not be obtained by the American system of mass production. Thanks, too, to this variety, they can supply the United States with specialities possessing that highly original touch so necessary in the rapid change of fashions in New York. The fabrics imported from Switzerland make evening dresses for all climates and that is why these textile products are so well suited to the very varied climates and latitudes of this great continent of the United States.

Th. de Chambrier



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